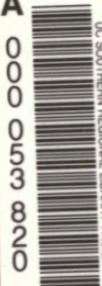


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:: THOUGHTS ::

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— POEMS —

Pictures in the Fire

BY

HILDA L. EVERETT

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Geo. Cook

Regnold Boden

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:: THOUGHTS ::

— POEMS —

Pictures in the Fire

BY
HILDA L. EVERETT

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[n.p.]

ELY:
G W. JEFFERSON,
PRINTER AND PUBLISHER.
22672

[n.d.]

200 COPY

PICTURES IN THE FIRE.

Christmas Afternoon:—A young man on his way home is met by his Grandfather while the other members of the family are about their farmyard duties.

MISTS of pearly softness linger'd
O'er the silent stretch of fen,
With a mute caress,—a message
To the list'ning hearts of men.

Rutted drovelands, firm and crusted
By the frost from day to day,
Pasture-land and fallow acr'age
All in quiet wonder lay.

Treach'rous waterways, ice-coated,
Dumb between their banks of reed,—
Dykes where weed and bramble mingled,
Check'd the trav'lers' hasty lead.

“Nay, my laddie, keep the drove-way,
Danger lurks across ‘The Cut,’ ”
And the old eyes twinkled fondly,—
“Travel in the same old rut.”

“Aye, but Grandsire I am eager
To rejoin the family throng,
Oh 'twas good you came to meet me
Else the way had seem'd so long.”

And the youth in budding manhood
Looked into the kind old face,
Linked his arm in courteous fondness,
Check'd his heedless, headlong pace.

Everywhere the mist hung deeper,—
Trees and landmarks near to sight,—
Lost their form as though in distance,
Wraiths within the mystic light.

“Hark!” the young face looked expectant
As he raised a warning hand,
“Hark—there’s Jean among her cattle
Singing to them as they stand.

Teddy too, I hear his whistle
On the mead beyond the drain,
Hunting eggs among the grasses
To a Christmas time refrain.

Dad will be among his horses
Feeding, grooming them,—and all,
Little Nan will be his helper,
Will they hear me if I call?

Half a mile or so, no further,
Then it will be ‘Home, Sweet Home,’
With the Mater, Dad and kiddies,
Home again—no more to roam.”

At home the little folk are eager to welcome brother Jack.

A GLOW of ruddy brightness
Streamed from the casement low,
Where ‘mong the downy cushions
A child danced to and fro.
For long the wee mite struggled
To clean the misty pane,
But dimpled, chubby fingers
Had rubbed and rubbed in vain.

The dancing firelight lingered
Upon the curly head,
The eyes so full of mischief,
The cheeks so rosy red.
A moment and the childie
Cried out in pure delight,
As, from the mist, the trav’lers
Came into nearer sight.

A merry whoop—a scramble
To reach the wide-flung door,
All heedless of remonstrance,—
The toys upon the floor.
The childie from the window,
The little lads from play,
The shy small girlies reading,
To 'Jacko' found their way.

He caught the childie to him
And rode her shoulder high,
The boys and girlies round him
Forgetful to be shy.
And in the firelight standing
With Christmas love and cheer,
The proud fond Mother linger'd
To one and all so dear.

Christmas Evening, and the whole family gather round the fire.

THE quaint low-ceilinged homestead
Breathed comfort everywhere,
The fragrant understanding
Of love's own joy to share.
Bright holly scaled the wainscot
And linked the oaken beam,
And flow'rs in full profusion
Joined in the Christmas theme.

The lamps had long been lighted,
The window curtains drawn,
The fire built high and firmly
Of Yule logs newly sawn.
And comfy chairs and lounges
And humpys, stools and all,
Were drawn within the brightness,
'Way from the shadow'd wall.

And one and all they gathered;
Lads,—lassies,—young and old,
And merry chatter held them
And Christmas tales were told,
'Till as the bairnies tired
And nestled drowsily,
A tender quiet touch'd them
And each sat dreamily,—

Lost in the thoughts of Christmas,
Its beauty, love and light,
Its hope of understanding,
Of fuller, clearer sight.
The Yule logs sparkled freely,
The flames leaped high and high'r,
And each in dream-thought followed
The 'Pictures in the Fire.'

PICTURES FOR JANUARY.

The Organist and his little Grand-daughter.

From 'Springtime Symphony.'

ALL night long the snow had fallen,
And the flakes of whiteness lay
Cuddled into one another,
Crisp and sparkling on the way.
Ev'ry path was closely hidden,
Footprints of the yesterday
And the new life of the dawning,
Cut and traced its onward way.
"Grandy," cried a gentle maiden
Turning from the casement wide
"Make the music of the snow-drop
That the snow had come to hide.
Play the great still silence Grandy,
And the bigness of it all,
Play the snowflake, oh so softly
That you cannot hear it fall.

Life.

From 'In the Firelight.'

LIFE seemed strange, a wide, deep question,
Big strong men bent low in tears,
Hard unlovely faces soften'd
Smiles out-peep'd thro' cloudy fears.
Gladness—sadness mingled softly,
Pain and pleasure,—darkness,—light,
Kindness—sweetness,—thought unlovely,—
Wrong seem'd ever touch'd by right.

A Mother and her Boy.

From 'Fide et Amore.'

THE glad bright sunshine of the Winter day
Flooded the path, between
The wide flung open door,—the granite wall
That girt the homestead green.
Upon the threshold, ling'ring in the light
To fearsome musings prone,
A mother stood to watch her boy go forth,
Into the world—alone.

Ideals.

From 'Golden Brightness.'

AS sunlit mountain peaks, they rise into the light,
Strong, firm and ever unafraid of mystery and blight.
Worthy the dawn that breaks in silence all around,
And wakes the life that dormant lies, the loveliness
unfound.

PICTURES FOR FEBRUARY.

Go Deep Enough.

From 'Out of Doors.'

LOOK 'neath the pucker and the frown,
The hasty word,—the slight that brings the castle
down,—
The cold reserve,—the silence that we fear to drown.

Little Peter.

From 'Fide et Amore.'

UP and down the wide oak staircase,
Clinging to the polished rails,
Darting out into the kitchen
Dabbling 'mong the noisy pails,—
Peeping at the fragrant cookies,
Little knowing work from play,
'Peterkins' was always welcome
Never told to "run away."

The Coming of Spring.

From 'Springtime.'

FRAGRANCE—wonder,—new life stirreth,
 Grass grows softly green,
Harrow'd earth, deep—rich—and fragrant
 Throbs with power unseen.

Golden Hours.

From 'Springtime.'

ROUND the festive board we gather'd,
Then around the cosy fire,
Chatting gaily,—deeply—brightly,
Thoughts that tender love inspire.
Tea-cups call'd us, lamps were lighted,
Curtains all were closely drawn,
Laughter—gladness—echo'd brightly,
Softly,—sweetly, gently borne.

PICTURES FOR MARCH.

Everyone's Darling.

From 'Winter Sunshine.'

JUST a blue-eyed little darling,—
How she laughs with roguish glee,
When some mischief she is planning,
Coyly waiting,—‘ just to see.’
Fair soft locks just loosely ribbon’d,
Blue to match those open eyes,
Wide and large when gravely watching,
Held by some new glad surprise.
Happy temper’d—sweet, aye lovely,
Hear her lisp her little prayer,
Call “Goodnight” to all around her,
Then to sleep without a care.

Washing Day.

From 'A Spring Idyll.'

THE little one had tired and Nancy lass
Had borne him way to sleep,
And fondling long the sweet unconscious brow
Her thoughts flow’d wide and deep
Then light of step she left the sleeping babe,—
For why ’twas ‘washing day.’—
A pile of fragrant linen stood, that she
Could fold and bear away.
The freshness of the Springtime air it held,
A glint of sunny light,
A sweet suggestion of the soft blue sky.
That gave the work delight.
The basket was refill’d again, again
And Nancy with a song
Upon her lips, and smile within her eye,
Work’d happily and long.

The Traveller's Welcome.

From 'Fide et Amore.'

"SAY, are you all at home?"

The house bell sounded thro' the silent hall,
And willing footsteps rang,
In loving answer to the plaintive call.

Strong kindly hands outstretched
With ready welcome and with hearty cheer,
They eased the heavy coat,
And drew him to the fire, and gently near,—
Into the heart of home,
Where in the shaded light the wee babe slept:
They linked his hand,—and watched,—
And to his lonely heart new gladness crept.

PICTURES FOR APRIL.

Spring.

From 'Springtime Symphony.'

AND child "Spring" danced into her regal own:
With golden locks and liquid soft blue eyes,
Her happy presence thrill'd the silver'd air
With sweet surprise.

The Organist and the Blackbird.

From 'Springtime Symphony.'

THE organist with white uncovered head
Paused by the knotted five-barred gate, his hand
As e'er with gentle touch, upon the frame
That countless storms and suns had braved to stand.
A blackbird unafraid his gentle eye,
Lingered upon the budding hawthorn tree,
And reached his music-loving soul
With strains of joy and hope,—full melody.

Night-time in Hospital.

From 'Winter Sunshine.'

THE silent wards, breathe peaceful calm and rest,
Sleep lingers close, health's tonic sweet and best.

From some far home, a tender loving thought
Is softly breathed, and here by love is caught.

* * *

A door is ope'd, the silent midnight air
Takes up the sound, though soft with mindful care.
'Tis Nurse who comes on duty through the night,
From bed to bed she moves 'neath soft dim light.
A drink perchance for they who thirst, and wake,
A pillow turned, for heads that tire and ache.

* * *

The silence grows, her footsteps die away,
And all is still,—Night waits the coming Day.

A Twilight Fantasy.

From 'Spring Light.'

"TWILIGHT" with new graces linger'd,
O'er the soft sweet scented lawn,
As though breathing some fond message,
To await her sister "Dawn."

PICTURES FOR MAY.

The Maytime Sky.

From 'Springtime.'

THE tend'rest blue that Heaven doth know,—
Not liquid heights
Of some all-radiant summer day,
But soft and fair,—the joy of May,
Mist-woven lights.

The Little Wanderer.

From 'Beauty and Fragrance.'

A TODDLING mite fresh from his bath,
'Scaped from his Mummy's care,
Had gain'd the sunny road alone,
His fearless arts to dare.

A strong kind voice with cheery word,
O'er took the little feet,
And bribed the little wand'rer home,
With cake or tempting sweet.

Chivalry.

From 'Out of Doors.'

BENT with age,—and weary struggling
With the unexpected shower,
"Granny" shelter'd 'neath the ruins
Of the ancient Abbey Tower.
But her breath came slow and fitful,
For the path was rough and steep,
Oft she falter'd trying vainly,
'Neath the inner wall to keep.
But two laddies, treasure hunting
By the deep enchanted well,
Saw her struggle, and her danger,
Dreaded lest she tripp'd and fell.
Quick as thought they hasten'd to her
Greeted her with quaint respect,
Guided,—bore her up the incline,—
One of England's own elect.

PICTURES FOR JUNE.

A Country Road in June.

From 'Rural Scenes.'

ON the hillside—off the roadway,
Here and there a farm doth stand,
Oft with ancient barns and timber,
That would joy the artist's hand.
Flow'rets cluster in the gardens,
Fragrance fills the sunny air,
Roses climb in sweet profusion,
Making cot and homesteads fair.

A Little Child at Play.

From 'Harvest Days.'

THRO' the quaint deep open window,
Where sweet jasmine held its sway,
Came the voice, the happy laughter
Of a little child at play.

A Lassie and her Lad.

From 'Autumn Days.'

ALONG the country roadway,
Where dust lay thick and white,
A herd of cattle,—slowly,
Moved into nearer sight.
The winsome lass attending,
Caressed with tender voice
Each grave-eyed wistful milker,
And led to grassland choice.
The cattle mildly grazing,—
The five-barred gate made fast,
The lass—her eyes ashading,
Wide longing glances cast.
A soft low whistle sounded,—
That stirred a deep rose-blush,
An answ'ring "Coo-ee,"—sweetly,
A deep expectant hush.

Moonlight.

From 'The Message of Spring.'

THE distant Church—the village wrapt in sleep,
 Rest 'neath its charm,
The lonely cot, 'way on the grassy steep,
 The wayside farm—
The silver'd lane,—the softly lighted bower,
Responsive, catch the ever magic power.

PICTURES FOR JULY.

Dawn-

From 'Twelve Short Poems.'

The Village Street on a Summer Morn.

From 'Beauty and Fragrance.'

THE farmyard gates swung back and fore,
Carts rumbled on the stone,
Man greeted man with cheery word,
None passed the way alone.

A herd of kine in pasturage far
Thro'-out the soft warm night,
Came slowly thro' the village street
Within the new clear light.
With gaysome step the boys and girls
'Way to the farmhouse ran,
Bright with the morning, fresh and glad,
High swinging jug or can.

Kindness.

From 'Wayside Pictures.'

OH joy in life's kindness—as grass by the way,
Or shade of the leafage above,
Kindness grown greater than justice and right,—
Just the little bit more,—that's Love.

Nancy's Ideal.

From 'A Spring Idyll.'

THE lass was ling'ring by the open door
Lost in unspoken thought,
The sunset sky in all its golden light,
Her fond far gaze had caught.

* * *

"Oh yes," she softly breathed, "I want to help
The great big world to live,—
To understand the real,—the true,—the glad,—
And of its highest give."

PICTURES FOR AUGUST.

The New Day.

From 'The Message of Spring.'

A LOVELY pearl of creamy depths, a gem all-pure—
Un-made by man,—untouched—all-real, [all-true,
With power to pain,—to joy,—to heal,
A sacred gift and true.

A Young Apollo.

From 'Out of Doors.'

A WOODCRAFT laddie of some tender years,
A Tracker of St. Catherine's famous Clan,
Linger'd anear the homestead garden gate,
'E're for his morning dip he thither ran.

* * *

Tingling and glowing,—every pulse alert,
Bright pearl-drops sparkling 'mong his raven hair,
As young Apollo deeming life a joy,
He faced the day with pride to do,—to dare.

Summertime.

From 'Beauty and Fragrance.'

THE honey-bees are busy in the flowers,
Their droning hangs upon the scented air,
And with a sense of drowsy restfulness
We watch the worker buzzing here and there.

The dusted road, bone-coloured in the sun
Like corded ribbon, winds between the fields,
And bears upon its crown, the Summer joy,
The burden that the fertile fenland yields.
The noon-day heat hangs purple on the fen,
While suns ride high, majestic and grand,—
Oh joy the Summer-time of rose-bright dreams,
When luscious days abloom on every hand.

Twilight o'er the Fen.

From 'Harvest Days.'

THE quiet fen
Within the dreamy light, lay wrapt in charm,
Her tranquil life
Breathed deep of peace from every cot and farm.

PICTURES FOR SEPTEMBER.

The Cloud-Child.

From 'Springtime.'

A BILL'WY mass of snowy clouds,
Stretch'd 'cross a span of sky,
So soft and white, one dreamed of snow,
Piled lightly, pure and high,—
Where little folk of tender years,
A-frolic,—climb and play,
And search the mystic snow-built caves,
'Midst laughter bright and gay.
'Way on the further edge,—one stray'd,—
A wee maid softly clad,
As though a tender Thought-Child,—born
To make the world more glad.
One little foot, outstretch'd, to touch
The depths of soft sweet blue,
She smiled a bright illumined smile,—
All life was glad and new.

In the Cornfield.

From 'Harvest Days.'

THE whit'ning oats in glitt'ring golden light,
The barley grain,
With soften'd bearded growth as woven silk,
Passed on the sweet refrain.
Backward and fore, a heaving sea of light,
Pulsing and strong,
A thousand thoughts,—a myriad hopes upcaught,
And link'd in dauntless song.
With child's all simple trust, a little lass
Had strayed to hear,
And silent 'mong the whisp'ring grain she stood,
With 'tentive list'ning ear.

A white hair'd veteran, bronzed with former suns,
 Paused in the way
And link'd the little hand with his,—and breathed
 "There is no other way."

The Young Musician.

From 'Golden Melody.'

WITHIN the soften'd fire-light glow
In poise of easy grace,
The young musician stood, and raised
 His fiddle into place.
In softness,—sweetness,—shyness born
E'en from the depths of power
The loveliest strain of music broke
 The silence of the hour.
A ling'ring pleading, softly borne,
A yearning, deep hope-thought,
'Way upward thro' the courts of space—
 In throbbing vastness caught.

PICTURES FOR OCTOBER.

Friendship.

From 'Our Treasures.'

E'EN tho' dark shades should hover near and fall,—
 It lives with beauty still—nor fades,
But lights the darkness there.
Or in the sunlight, should its beauty shine
 'Neath skies of tender blue,
Its life yet gleams,—all-pure—divine,—
 In sweet glad sympathy.

Autumn Tints.

From 'Beauty and Fragrance.'

THE amber sunlight softly fill'd the day,
Cool quiet hours sped lightly, tenderly,—
 Along the way.

The fires of Autumn cast a ruddy glow
Thro' thinning trees,—o'er open fenland tracks,
Lands high and low.
The hedgerow gay with myriad gems of light,
Gleam'd thro' the short'ning days, and thro' the clear
Autumnal night.

In Fond Memory.

(Mrs. C. M. Bearcock.)

THE mellow Autumn sunshine streamed
Around her as she stood,
Watching the sunset, work was o'er
And evening time seemed good.
Her boys pressed round her, fondly near,—
Chums ever—work or play,
Her silent look, her gentlest word
Had always won the day.
Their sweethearts came,—their little ones
Climbed gaily on her knee,
She smiling caught her husband's glance--
Oh life was good to be.--
Comrades in perfect harmony
They'd pressed from year to year,
And friends around in tender love
Joy'd in her life,—her cheer.

The Charm of the Fen.

From 'A Spring Idyll.'

THE little window in the thatch,
Again was open wide,
The curtains, lightly draped around,
Again were held aside.
'Twas Nancy lass aling'ring long,
Held by the old fen charm,
With dark-eyed tender radiance,
At one with night's deep calm.

PICTURES FOR NOVEMBER.

Autumn Mists.

From 'Autumn Days.'

THE Autumn day breathed sadness,
 The rain drawn sky bent low
And wept as tho' in sorrow,
 With teardrops soft and slow.
A breeze with tearful murmur
 Stirred as a half-breathed sigh,
A ling'ring heartfelt yearning,—
 A wistful, stifled cry.
A grey, soft mist fast gather'd,
 As tho' a host of fears
Enwrapping silent hedgerow,
 Bright in their haze of tears.
The trees, as veiled in sorrow,
 In depths of anxious thought,
Scarce murmur'd, lest a sob half breathed,
 Be softly, firmly caught.

The Little Child and the Tramp.

From 'Out of Doors.'

LOOK 'neath the ragged coat, ill-worn,
Of him who tramps our highways, abject and forlorn,
We do not see the struggles that his soul have torn.
 A little child with wise wide stare,
So unafraid the shabby coat, the grizzled hair,—
Looked in his face and nestled in his unused care.

Country Homesteads.

From 'Autumn Days.'

'WAY from tiny well thatched home-steads,
Circled soft blue curls of smoke,—
Round the cosy hearth-stones, gathered
 Happy country folk.

Childhood's Days.

From 'Fide et Amore.'

WHEN the lamps at last are lighted,
And the stars peep'd one by one,
From their bed of velvet darkness,
And the day's work all was done,—
'Peterkins' so tired and happy
Climbed on Mummy's waiting knee,
With sweet childhood's understanding
Of that loving sympathy.

PICTURES FOR DECEMBER.

The Young Mother.

From 'Fide et Amore.'

UNCONSCIOUS to the world
A girlish form on tireless knee bent low,
Beside her sleeping babe,
Within the warming firelight's fitful glow.
She turned, as on her right,
The curtained door was open'd from without,
And baby's Daddy came ;—
He link'd the hand she eagerly stretched out.

Christmastime.

From 'Our Treasures.'

LIKE a gem of deep—full beauty,
Happy Christmas Day,
Depths of light that radiates gladness
All along the way.
May its lightness gently guide you,
Of its beauty give,
That each moment radiates Christmas
Love and joy that live.

Their Boy.

From 'Fide et Amore.'

THE festive table laid for three,
 Told of expected joy,
Mother and Father breathed to each,
 " He'll come to-night—our boy."
The outer gate swung on its hinge,
 The gravel bore his tread,—
And Peter grasped his father's hand
 And joined the way he led.
Upright and strong, and true, and clean,
 With ideals pure and fine,
He clasped his mother fondly near,
 "It's alright Mother mine."

Home for Christmas.

From 'Gathered Threads.'

WITH hurrying feet,
 A winsome lass with laughing eye,
Sped 'cross the dark and silent fen,
 Beneath the velvet, night-deep sky.
A stream of light,—
 The cottage door was open'd wide,
And brothers, sisters, cluster'd round
 And bore her joyously inside.
The fire flamed high,
 The little kettle sang with glee,
And table spread with snow-white cloth,
 Told of a long belated tea.
" Home, Mother mine!
 Home, Daddy dear!—There is no place
Just like to home at Christmastime,"—
 And Daddy touch'd the radiant face.

A LOVING MEMORY.

(Mr. W. E. Hudson.)

THE long low-ceilinged room,—with beams
Of knotted, rugged oak, upcaught
The magic of the firelight glow,
And breathed a beauty inly wrought.
“The days pull in,”—the fine old man
Low in his fireside cushioned chair,
Watched for a space the dark’ning sky,
“The days pull in,” he spoke with care.
His daughter from the window turned
With opened letters in her hold,—
And news of loved ones far away
She read aloud, or clearly told.
The lamps were lighted, curtains drawn,
Another log heaped on the fire
The snow-white cloth was laid for tea
The kettle raised a little higher.
“Now for a ‘sup’ of tea and toast,”
The words were gaily, brightly said
And with a fond and genial smile,
The old man watched the crisping bread.
The lamp-light with caressing touch,
Fell on the mass of snow-white hair
That crowned the healthful happy face
Which told of love and watchful care.
The door-latch from without was raised,—
A neighbour on the threshold stood,
And smiles of welcome from the twain,
Held greeting that was warm and good.
The pride of hospitality
Shone on the kind old happy face,
And father,—daughter joy’d, that home,
Should prove to all, a gladsome place.

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